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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [DJ](#) [ER](#) [ET](#) [KE](#) [SO](#) [NO](#)
SUBJECT: NORWAY CONTINUES ITS SUBSTANTIAL AID TO THE HORN
OF AFRICA

REF: STATE 69644

Classified By: Political Counselor Kristen Bauer for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In response to reftel, Norway shares our concern about the crisis in the horn of Africa, and is currently the third largest donor in Somalia. Norway does not have the naval materiel or manpower to escort WFP ships around the horn, and claims not to have good access to information about Eritrea. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Political Counselor and Poloff delivered reftel demarche on July 2 to Ambassador Kjell Dalen of the MFA Section for East and Central Africa. Also at the meeting were two representatives from the MFA Humanitarian Aid section.

SOMALIA

¶3. (C) Norway gives substantial aid to Somalia, and was its third largest donor in 2007, giving approximately \$33 million in humanitarian aid. In 2008, the GON expects to give \$35 million. Norway contributes approximately \$12 million to a WFP food crisis fund, of which \$11 million goes to Somalia. In 2008, Dalen said that a key diplomatic priority would be improving the humanitarian aid access situation.

¶4. (C) When asked about Norwegian NGOs working on humanitarian aid in Somalia, Dalen listed: 1) The Norwegian Refugee Council, working in Mogadishu, 2) Norwegian Church Aid, working in the north of the country, 3) Norwegian Peoples' Aid, working in Puntland and addressing the drought situation, and 4) religious missions such as the Adventists and Pentacostalists, which are also largely funded by the GON.

ETHIOPIA

¶5. (C) The worsening situation in Ethiopia has caused the Norwegian government to reduce levels of aid more slowly than was planned after Ethiopia expelled six Norwegian diplomats last August. Norway contributed approximately \$2 million in February 2008 to UNCRF, and added another \$5 million in June as the food crisis intensified. When pressed on the ramifications of the political tensions between Ethiopia and Norway, Dalen said that, "in principle," humanitarian aid is not dependent on a regime, although Norway's development assistance to Ethiopia was scaled down by a factor of \$5 million last year.

ERITREA

¶6. (C) Dalen agreed accurate reporting of the real situation on the ground in Eritrea is difficult to obtain, although Norwegian Church Aid is still operational in the country and can occasionally travel outside of Asmara. The Norwegian

government has helped set up the Eritrean statistics bureau, but political realities prevent the bureau from either collecting or sharing any data with the Norwegians. When asked who the Eritreans are most likely to share with, Dalen said that UN agencies and larger actors like the EU appear to be "preferred" partners. Dalen also commented that President Isaias appears to be surrounded by advisors who tell him whatever they think he wants to hear and so he probably doesn't have accurate information either.

NAVAL ESCORTS

¶ 7. (S) In response to the need for naval assets to escort WFP ships, our interlocutors seemed stunned at the news that, as of June 25, no country had taken up this duty. In early 2008, the MFA had discussed with the Norwegian DOD the possibility of providing this service, and were told that no escort vessels were available. Post's DAO confirms that Norway currently does not have sufficient capability to staff or provide materiel for a blue-water naval mission near the Horn of Africa.

GENERAL OUTLOOK

¶ 8. (C) When asked about the Norwegian prognosis for the Horn of Africa over the next six months, Dalen said that increasing fuel and food prices meant that, although more money is sure to come from donors, it may only serve to maintain current flows of food aid which will not be enough to assuage the crisis. On Norway's role in the region, Dalen said that Norway could afford to be "big" when it came to humanitarian aid because of regulatory flexibility, but other actors ultimately have more flexibility when it comes to development assistance. As such, Dalen expected that if the situation in Somalia were to normalize somewhat, others could step up to the plate.

JOHNSON